

Message Text

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ACTION ORM-01

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1216

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 3771

BEIRUT POUCH USINT BAGHDAD

ATHENS FOR INS, ROME FOR INS, FRANKFURT FOR INS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SREF, IR, IZ

SUBJ: KURDISH REFUGEES FROM IRAQ

REFS: (A) STATE 87784; (B) GENEVA 2738; (C) BEIRUT 5094

1. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS DEPARTMENT ASK INS TO ESTABLISH
CONDITIONAL ENTRY PROGRAM FOR KURDISH REFUGEES IN IRAN.
ALTHOUGH A FEW KURDS HAVE TRAVELLED TO INS PROCESSING
CENTERS, MOST ARE UNABLE TO DO SO. EMBASSY APPRECIATES
DIFFICULTIES WHICH INS OFFICES IN OTHER CAPITALS WOULD
HAVE IN PROCESSING KURDS (REFTELS B AND C) AND BELIEVES
PROGRAM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT TEHRAN.

2. IN OUR VIEW GENUINE REFUGEE STATUS EXISTS FOR SMALL
NUMBER OF EDUCATED KURDS WHO COOPERATED WITH BARZANI AND
HIS PESH MERGA TROOPS. IRAQI GENERAL AMNESTY FOR KURDS
DID NOT EXTEND TO MEMBERS OF QTE BARZANI CLIQUE UNQTE
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(BAGHDAD 267 NOTAL) AND MOST OF FORTY KURDISH REFUGEES WHO

HAVE ASKED FOR REFUGEE STATUS TO GO TO THE US CLAIM TO HAVE TAKEN ACTIVE PART IN BARZANI'S REBEL GOVERNMENT OR FOUGHT IN PESH MERGA. THEY FEAR PERSECUTION IF THEY RETURN AND SOME CLAIM TO HAVE TALKED TO SURVIVORS OF MASSACRES OF SURRENDERED KURDS. ALTHOUGH IRAN IS WILLING, ACCORDING TO SHAH, TO ASSIMILATE ALL KURDS WHO DESIRE TO REMAIN IN COUNTRY, THERE IS AS YET NO INDICATION OF PROGRAM TO OFFER EDUCATED KURDS EMPLOYMENT OUTSIDE OF REFUGEE CAMPS. THEY THUS FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE. ON OTHER HAND, MOST KURDISH REFUGEES ARE FARMERS, SHEPHERDS, AND LABORERS WHO HAVE ONLY TWO VIABLE OPTIONS: SETTLE DOWN IN IRAN OR RETURN TO IRAQ. THEY WOULD HAVE NO DESIRE TO GO TO US. AMCONSUL TABRIZ STATES SOME 10,000 HAVE RETURNED TO IRAQ IN RECENT WEEKS. (REPORTS FROM BAGHDAD CONCERNING REASONABLE TREATMENT OF RETURNEES TO, AND RESIDENTS OF, FORMER BARZANI-HELD AREAS PROBABLY APPLY GENERALLY TO PEOPLE IN THESE CATEGORIES.) BECAUSE OF THESE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS, EMBASSY DOES NOT FORESEE LARGE FLOW OF APPLICANTS PREDICTED IN REFTEL B.

3. ESTABLISHMENT IN TEHRAN OF INS PROGRAM FOR BRIEF PERIOD SEEMS FEASIBLE. IN PUBLIC COMMENT APRIL 21, IRANIAN SPOKESMAN DENIED UPI REPORT FROM GENEVA THAT 30,000 KURDS WERE BEING KEPT TOGETHER BY IRAN AND GIVEN INFANTRY TRAINING, AND IN PROCESS STATED THAT ANY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION WHICH DESIRED TO ACCEPT KURDISH REFUGEES WOULD FIND IRAN RECEPTIVE. IN VIEW THIS STATEMENT, EMBASSY WOULD EXPECT NO DIFFICULTIES IN ARRANGING INS INTERROGATION OF KURDISH APPLICANTS (PARA 3, REFTEL A) ALTHOUGH THIS HAS NOT BEEN DISCUSSED WITH GOI. WE EXPECT THERE WOULD BE FEW IRANIAN RECORDS CONCERNING KURDISH REFUGEES--PERHAPS RECORDS OF ENTRY INTO IRAN WOULD BE AVAILABLE. WE DOUBT IRAN WOULD AGREE TO RIGHT OF RETURN TO IRAN FOR REFUGEES WITHIN TWO YEARS IF THEY WERE FOUND INELIGIBLE TO REMAIN IN U.S. SUCH A POSSIBILITY WOULD BE POTENTIAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR GOI. IS IT POSSIBLE TO MAKE EXCEPTION TO THIS REQUIREMENT?

4. MAIN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY INTEREST SERVED BY KURDISH CONDITIONAL ENTRY PROGRAM IS HUMANITARIAN CONCERN FOR REFUGEES WHICH HAS BEEN CONSISTENT FEATURE OF U.S. FOREIGN POLICY. THAT FOREIGN POLICY INTEREST COULD BE
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SERVED WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE COST IN VIEW LIMITED NUMBER OF APPLICANTS. ONLY POSSIBLE DISADVANTAGE WE SEE IS POTENTIAL IRAQI DISPLEASURE AT THIS ACTION WHICH COULD AFFECT INCIPIENT MOVEMENT TOWARD REESTABLISHMENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, BUT LIMITED NATURE OF PROGRAM WE ENVISAGE WOULD OFFER ONLY VERY SMALL TARGET.
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